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ABSTRACT

During the summer and fall orientation of 1968, 1970, and 1972, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 528 other institutions of higher education, including 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges, and universities. The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data base on questionnaire results from the 38 participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshmen classes of previous years. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate "Religious Background" and "Present Religious Preference." The first of this report examines the religious background and present religious preference of University of South Carolina freshmen for the years 1968, 1970, and 1972, and compares them to the national university norms for the corresponding time periods. Secondly, analysis between in-state and out-of-state freshmen students at the University of South Carolina for 1972 is presented. The report concludes by summarizing the principal findings of the questionnaire responses. (Author)

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During the Summer and Fall Orientation of 1968, 1970 and 1972, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 528 other institutions of higher education, including two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the 38 participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshmen classes of previous years.

The following is part of a series of reports drawn from analysis of these data. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate "Religious Background" and "Present Religious Preference." The first part of this report examines the religious background and present religious preference of University of South Carolina freshmen for the years 1968, 1970, and 1972, and compares them to the national university norms for the corresponding time periods. Secondly, analysis between in-state and out-of-state freshmen students at the University of South Carolina for 1972 is presented. The report concludes by summarizing the principal findings of the questionnaire responses.

Table 1

Religious Background[1] and Present Religious Preference of USC Entering Freshmen and National University Norms for 1968, 1970, and 1972.

Religious Background	1968		1970		1972		Difference USC/Nat'l 1968-1972	
	USC	NAT'L	USC	NAT'L	USC	NAT'L	USC	NAT'L
Protestant	75.3	54.1	84.3	57.1	75.9	49.7	+0.6	-4.4
Catholic	13.4	30.4	10.3	27.0	12.5	32.5	-0.9	+2.1
Jewish	2.8	8.0	2.0	9.3	2.3	6.8	-0.5	-1.2
Other	7.8	5.1	1.9	3.2	8.0	7.1	+0.2	+2.0
None	0.8	2.4	1.5	3.5	1.2	3.9	+0.4	+1.5
Present Religious Preference								
Protestant	69.4	46.8	76.8	49.1	64.3	40.5	-5.1	-6.3
Catholic	12.2	28.0	10.5	25.0	10.6	26.8	-1.6	-1.2
Jewish	2.7	7.0	2.0	8.1	2.3	5.9	-0.4	-1.1
Other	8.5	6.5	3.1	4.4	9.5	9.2	+1.0	+2.7
None	7.2	11.7	7.7	13.4	13.3	17.6	+6.1	+5.9

COMMENTS:

1. U.S.C. entering freshmen, in comparison with their national counterparts, were more likely to be Protestant, and less likely to be Catholic, Jewish, or to express "none" as their religious background or preference.

2. During the period 1968-1972, the percentage of U.S.C. entering freshman indicating "none" as their regligious background has remained less than one-half the percentage in other universities.

3. In terms of current religious preference, there has been an increasing percentage of students responding to the "other" and "none" categories. These increases were offset with slight decreases in the percentage of students identifying with Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish faiths.

[1]For the year 1970 the term "Religious Background" was changed to "Mother's Religious Preference." In 1972, the term "Mother's Religious Preference" was changed to "Religion Reared." For reporting purposes the term "Religious Background" has been used to identify this portion of the table.

Table 2

A Comparison of Religious Attitudes Between In-State U.S.C. Entering Students and Out-of-State Entering Students for 1972.

	IN-STATE			OUT-OF-STATE			DIFFERENCE IN-STATE/OUT-OF-STATE		
Religion Reared	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Protestant	79.7	80.2	79.9	54.7	63.3	58.1	+25.0	+16.9	+21.8
Catholic	8.2	9.4	8.7	32.0	26.0	29.6	-23.8	-16.6	-20.9
Jewish	1.8	1.6	1.7	3.6	6.7	4.8	- 1.8	- 5.1	- 3.1
Other	8.7	7.9	8.4	9.3	2.0	6.4	- 0.6	+ 5.9	+ 2.0
None	1.6	0.8	1.2	0.4	2.0	1.1	+ 1.2	- 1.2	+ 0.1
Present Religious Preference									
Protestant	66.7	70.2	68.2	43.6	51.0	46.5	+23.4	+19.2	+21.7
Catholic	6.7	9.0	7.7	24.4	22.5	23.7	-17.7	-13.5	-16.0
Jewish	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.6	6.0	4.5	- 1.7	- 4.2	- 2.7
Other	10.5	10.0	10.3	9.3	1.3	6.1	+ 1.2	+ 8.7	+ 4.2
None	14.2	9.0	11.9	19.1	19.2	19.1	- 4.9	-10.2	- 7.2

Comments:

1. For "Religion Reared," 1.2% of in-state students indicated "none," whereas, 1.1% of out-of-state students responded "none." However, 11.9% of in-state students indicated "none" to "Present Religious Preference" and 19.1% of all out-of-state students answered "none."

2. There appeared to be a larger percentage of in-state students having Protestant backgrounds compared to out-of-state students. On the other hand, 29.6% of all out-of-state students indicated that they were reared as Catholics compared to only 8.7% of all in-state students.

3. There was a larger percentage of in-state males than females responding "none" to "Present Religious Preference." Conversely more out-of-state females responded "none" to "Present Religious Preference" than out-of-state males.

4. It is evident that fewer students indicated "Protestant" as their present "religious preference" compared to their responses for "religion reared." This held true for males and females, and probably accounted for the percentage increase of those who responded "none," and to a lesser extent to those who responded "other," for their present religious preference.

Conclusions:

1. U.S.C. entering freshmen as a group have continued to present a significantly different religious profile when compared with their national counterparts during the period 1968-1972. U.S.C. freshmen, in comparision with national norms, were more likely to be Protestant, and less likely to be Catholic, Jewish or to express "none" as their religious background or preference.

2. The increase in the percent of "other" responses was probably related to the increase in religious interest among young people during this time period. Support of changes in the number of religious faiths has been revealed in the Carolina Community, the student handbook at U.S.C. In 1968, only 8 religious affiliations were listed; in 1972, 14 such affiliations were described. These new listings included several non-traditional religious groups such as the Baha'i Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Eckankar Association.

3. Females did not appear to be deserting their religious backgrounds to as great a degree as were males; nevertheless, there was a definite trend among females to respond in a manner which would suggest a movement away from a strict adherence to their religious background. Conversely, a movement toward other denominations was witnessed through increased numbers of denominations and varied religious faiths for example, Buddhist, Hindu.

4. The Protestant faith appeared to be losing more followers among entering students than were other faiths.